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SUBJECT: POSITIVE SWEDISH REACTIONS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA'S  
CAIRO SPEECH

REF: SECSTATE 55334

¶1. (U) On Thursday, June 4, Embassy Stockholm hosted a lunch for key Muslim contacts to watch President Obama's speech to the Muslim world and discuss their initial thoughts and reactions.

¶2. (U) In general, the speech was well received by the Swedish Muslims. The guests highlighted appreciation for the sense of respect President Obama conveyed as he spoke of the history of great achievements from Muslim majority countries. The President's use of quotations from the Koran was also well-received. One of the participants, a prominent Imam, said he believed the speech was a "bridge-builder of historical proportions" to the Muslim communities around the world, who believe they are all too often stereotyped. Another participant reflected a sense of hope that the President's words will really be turned into action, noting that if, in two years' time, he can travel to the United States and not feel the sense of discrimination and suspicion that he felt when he went to the United States two years ago, President Obama will have succeeded. The biggest concern from the group was that there would be a negative reaction in the Muslim world from what they perceived as a down-playing of Israeli actions in Gaza.

¶3. (U) The Swedes believe the speech will increase the prospects for Turkey becoming a member of the European Union. Foreign Minister Carl Bildt expressed his appreciation and stated that the speech was of "strategic significance for Turkey joining the European Union and that it sends a powerful signal to the rest of the world."

¶4. (U) The media also reported favorably on the speech, paying particular attention to the statements by the President that he would personally work to achieve a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and his condemnation of the construction of new Israeli settlements - a statement welcomed across the Swedish political landscape. However, while the speech was described as rhetorically excellent, some observers skeptically noted that success would be determined by how the words would be translated into results. Most outlets noted that this was clearly a historical new beginning in the U.S. relationship with the Muslim world.

¶5. (U) Post plans to host a second viewing of the speech later in June, with a larger audience of Muslim contacts.  
SILVERMAN